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Public Health Committee: H.B. 6200  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee:

I'm writing in support of proposed bill 6200, ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF LONG-TERM ANTIBIOTICS FOR THE TREATMENT OF LYME DISEASE.***

This bill is about the freedom of physicians to be able to choose how to treat Lyme on a case-by-case basis. It gives patients the freedom to be able to have their disease treated until they are well, not based on a limited regimen specified by the IDSA.

I've been following Lyme and other tick-borne diseases since the early eighties. I've seen it become the largest vector-borne disease in both CT and the US. I didn't actually have first-hand experience with Lyme until I moved to Connecticut in the mid nineties. I enjoy gardening and the outdoors. I know better than most about pants in the socks, sprays, and tick checks, yet I've been treated for Lyme four times since I moved here from lower Westchester.

Since the early eighties, I've watched many aspects about this problem get worse... more deer, more ticks, rise of co-infections, poor and inconsistent reports of the disease (estimated by the CDC to be ten times greater than actual cases reported), knowledge of the diseases, and the remarkable absence of physicians who specialize in the treatment of tick-borne diseases.

Since we are in a Lyme endemic area, it is reasonable to expect that there would be a substantial number of physicians or clinics that advertise this specialty. I challenge you to find any CT doctor that mentions this specialty in their yellow page ad.

I've been a Rotarian for over a decade. Since 2000, the Rotary District 7980 encompassing the lower half of CT, has recognized the need for Lyme disease awareness. I am the Lyme Disease Awareness Coordinator for Rotary and I hold annual Rotary sponsored educational seminars. We hand out several hundred pounds of literature every year, none of which is produced by the CT Department of Public Health... because there is no funding.

There is DPH funding for prosecuting physicians who treat patients with Lyme using long-term antibiotics. You have the opportunity to redirect this prosecution effort into a more positive vein... one that actually addresses the growing tick-borne disease problem.

I would also like to encourage you to explore at a later date, what Drs. Galvan and Cartter have done, and are doing to combat the growing tick-borne disease problem. Please hold them accountable.

Sincerely yours,

Russell Cornelius